DEVELOPMENT SECRETARIAT.

The working of the Department of Mines and Explosives.

READ—

Correspondence ending with letter No. 457, dated 20th September 1930, from the Chief Inspector of Mines, submitting the Administration Report of the Department of Mines and Explosives for the year 1929-30.

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Recorded.

2. *Personnel.*—Mr. R. Bocquet, continued as Chief Inspector of Mines, during the year. Mr. C. E. Suryanarayana Rao, Inspector of Mines, was deputed to South Africa for a period of about six months to attend the Third Session of the Empire Mining and Metallurgical Congress held there in March 1930. Besides attending the Congress, Mr. Suryanarayana Rao availed himself of the opportunity to make a special study of modern mining practice, the law and system of Mines inspection obtaining in the Transvaal Mines, occupational diseases incidental to gold mining, etc. Mr. K. Duraiswamier, acted as Inspector of Mines during the period.

Mr. V. Ganesha Iyer, Works Manager of the Mysore Iron Works at Bhadravati, was appointed an Inspector of Mines in respect of the mines operated by the Mysore Iron Works, and the Chief Inspector of Mines was appointed *ex-officio* Inspector of Boilers for the Kolar Gold Field Mining area.

3. *Mining and Prospecting.*—The following statement shows the number of leases, licenses and certificates of approval that were current during the year as compared with those of the previous year:—

	1928-29.	1929-30.
Mining Leases	44	43
Prospecting Licenses ...	15	15
Collecting Licenses ..	3	3
Exploring do ..	4	Nil
Certificates of approval ..	34	21
Total ..	100	82

The number of mining leases for gold was the same as during the previous year, *viz.*, 21.

4. *Gold Mining Operations.*—As in the previous year, five Companies carried on gold mining operations, all of them being in the Kolar Gold Field area. The total quantities of fine gold and silver produced during the calendar year 1929 were approximately 363,741 ozs. and 17,810 ozs. respectively as against 375,886 ozs. and 21,082 ozs. during the previous year. The total value of both fine gold and silver produced amounted to £ 1,549,729 as against £ 1,606,638 during the previous year showing a decrease of £ 56,909 due to reduced production. All the gold produced except some small quantities realised from Cyanide slags, etc., was sold in India at favourable rates compared with the market quotations in London. The total amount paid in dividends showed a decrease of £ 36,908, being £ 270,545 as against £ 307,453 in the previous year, and worked out to 16·22 per cent on the paid up capital as against 18·44 per cent in 1928. There was a decrease of £ 3,480 in the royalty payable to Government owing to diminished production, the amount being £ 83,955 against £ 87,435 in 1928. Calculated in terms of Indian currency, the total demand on account of royalty payable on gold and silver, including the balance due for previous years, amounted to Rs. 14,93,638 out of which a some of Rs. 12,28,658 was collected leaving a balance of Rs. 2,64,981.

From 1882 to the end of 1929, the total quantity of fine gold produced was 16,263,020 ozs. of the aggregate value of £70,329,290. The total dividends paid amounted to £ 22,122,263 and [redacted] realised was £ 3,710,145.

5. *Position of the Mines.*—Owing to the increasing depths of the mines, the working costs are also said to be increasing gradually year by year and large sums of money are being spent on maintaining adequate ventilation at all the lower working places. Trained crews are maintained for prompt action in case of fires and a "Safety First" campaign is also carried on.

The estimated ore reserves of all the mines amounted to 1,387,501 tons at the end of the year 1929, or a decrease of 67,200 tons as compared with the figure for 1928.

6. *Other Minerals.*—The following statement shows the output, etc., of the minerals other than gold worked during the year.

Minerals	Quantity extracted	Quantity exported or sold	Royalty payable for the year
	Tons	Tons	Rs. a. p.
1. Manganese ..	44,150	32,290 (Includes ore from previous year's stock).	11,767 12 0
2. Chrome ..	27,048	17,204	16,096 9 10
3. Magnesite ..	1,276	.....	1,760 0 0 (dead rent)
4. Kaolin ...	3,273	3,273	2,628 0 0
5. Soapstone ..	106	105	150 0 0
6. Iron Ore ..	50,017	43,009	(Utilised by the Mysore Iron Works.)
7. Limestone ...	2,205	1,739	

7. *Inspections.*—The inspection of the mines on the Kolar Gold Field was systematic and regular. No serious defects or breaches of the mining rules were noticed. On the other hand, it is reported that considerable attention is being paid to the safety of workmen, regardless of cost.

Enquiries into all fatal and serious accidents were held and prosecutions for breaches of the mining rules were successfully launched except in one case in which the accused is absconding. Some mines outside the Kolar Gold Field were also inspected during the year in the Mysore and Kolar Districts, but no serious defects were noticed. One serious accident is reported to have occurred outside the Kolar Gold Field in the Tallur Chrome Mines, Mysore District, in which a stuff cooly lost his life by falling from a ladder. The books and accounts of the Mysore Gold Mining Company were inspected by the Comptroller in February 1930 in association with the Chief Inspector of Mines and with the help of the Company's Auditor. Government wish to convey their thanks to the Officers and staff of the Company for their co-operation in conducting the examination of the accounts.

Government have under their consideration the set of special rules applicable to small mines worked on the open-cast system submitted by the Chief Inspector, as also the draft revised rules for the grant of mining leases and prospecting licenses framed by him in consultation with the Director of Geology.

8. *Mining Labour.*—During the year 1929, 20,534 persons were employed in the mining industry as against 20,961 in 1928 showing a decrease of 427. Of the 18,454 persons employed in Gold Mining, 330 were Europeans, 379 Anglo-Indians and 17,745 Indians. The harmonious relationship hitherto existing between the employers and the employed was disturbed by the outbreak of an unprecedented strike in April 1930 lasting for a period of over 20 days in which the labourers of all the five mines, numbering about 16,000, took part. The cause of the strike was a misapprehension on the part of the workmen as to the real purpose of the Labour Registry Office which had been newly opened. They were easily led into believing that the object of this innovation was to obtain some unfair advantage over them. After fruitless attempts to come to a compromise with the strikers, the Mining Authorities, on the advice of the Dewan, finally agreed to withdraw the new rules and thus brought the strike to an end on the 28th April 1930. A remarkable feature of the strike was the absence of any damage to property in general. As a result of this incident, Government deputed a Special Officer to enquire into the conditions of labour on the Field and suggest ameliorative measures. The report of the Officer is under the consideration of Government.

9. *Accidents.*—The total number of accidents reported during the year was 234 against 194 in the previous year. Of these, 49 were fatal, 181 serious, 1 trivial and 3 non-mining. 83·91 per cent of the fatal and serious accidents were classed as unavoidable and the mortality was 3·55 per 1,000 persons employed against 2·05 during the previous year. In the case of rock bursts to which a large proportion of the fatal accidents is due, the present Chief Inspector (Mr. C. E. Suryanarayana Rao) reports that they continue to occur in spite of improved forms of supports, but that their disastrous effects are being gradually reduced and restricted to certain narrow zones of heavy ground. Mr. Suryanarayana Rao who has examined the system of supports obtaining in the South African Mines, during his recent visit there, is of opinion that in conformity with local conditions, the system adopted on the Kolar Gold Field is the best that could be thought of at present. Government have directed that special attention should be paid to these accidents so as to minimise the loss of life.

10. *Compensation for injuries.*—A total sum of Rs. 38,518-8-0 was deposited by the Mining Companies under the Workmen's Compensation Act, as against Rs. 20,715 during the preceding half-year ending 30th June 1929, out of which a sum of Rs. 35,276 was paid to the claimants.

11. *Prosecutions.*—Seventy-nine persons involved in 66 cases were prosecuted in connection with thefts and illegal possession of mining materials, of whom 59 were convicted, showing a decrease when compared with last year's figures. Twenty-eight persons were convicted for breach of rules, causing accidents, etc., as against 17 in 1928.

12. *Explosives.*—During the year (1929), 794 licenses were granted under the Mysore Explosives Rules as against 804 in the previous year, resulting in a decrease of 10. The departmental inspection of magazines and their premises was satisfactory. Eight reports of inspection of Government magazines in charge of Civil Officers which were received in the Chief Inspector's Office were scrutinised and the irregularities or defects requiring to be remedied were brought to the notice of the officers concerned. The number of inspections of licensed premises carried out by the Magistracy and the Police was 512 as against 381 in the previous year. Though there has been some improvement in this respect, yet the number of premises inspected represents only 37·03 per cent of that licensed. Government once again wish to impress upon all the Officers concerned the importance of the systematic inspection of such premises. As desired in last year's review, the Chief Inspector of Mines is requested to report the localities in which the inspections have not been carried out.

Sixty-two accidents due to explosives involving the death of 21 persons and serious injuries to 70 others were reported during the year as against 47, 11 and 53, the corresponding figures for the previous year. There were 15 cases of prosecution under the Mysore Explosives Rules.

Government are glad to note that the site selected for the location of fireworks shops in Kumbargundi Road, Bangalore City, has since been acquired by the Municipality and that arrangements are in progress for the formation of shop-sites, etc., in accordance with the approved plan.

General.—The work of the Department during the year was satisfactory. Government desire to take this opportunity of placing on record the valuable services rendered by the late Chief Inspector of Mines, Mr. R. Bocquet, who, after a period of 27 years' service, retired in August last.

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